

2
The Duty and Reward of CHARITY,
especially as it regardeth the Education
of Poor Children.

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A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at
B A N B U R Y
I N
O X F O R D S H I R E,

May 6. 1707.

At a Meeting of the
C O N T R I B U T O R S
T O T H E
C h a r i t y - S c h o o l
T H E R E.

By E D W A R D W E L C H M A N, M. A.
Rector of *Lapworth* in *Warwickshire*.

L O N D O N,

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THE
OFFICE OF THE
SHERIFF
OF THE COUNTY OF
SHERBURN
ONTARIO
IN THE MATTER OF
THE ESTATE OF
JAMES M. DUFFY
DECEASED
BY AND UNDER THE
LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT
OF THE SAID JAMES M. DUFFY
DECEASED
TRUSTEES OF THE ESTATE OF
JAMES M. DUFFY DECEASED

Gal. vi. Ver. 9, 10.

Let us not be weary in Well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all Men, especially unto them who are of the Household of Faith.

THE bare recital of these words upon the present occasion doth sufficiently bespeak your Attention. I shall wave therefore all Preambles, that I may the more largely Discourse on these several Particulars which are contain'd in them, viz.

I. That it is our *Duty* to do good.

II. That we must make use of all the *Opportunities* we have of doing so.

III. That our *Beneficence* ought to be *Universal*, and we are to look upon all Men as proper Objects of it; but yet,

IV. That we must have a particular regard to our fellow *Christians*, those who are of the *Household of Faith*.

V. And lastly, That if we *persevere* in doing good, we shall not fail of a *Reward*.

I. That it is our *Duty* to do good. And I shall urge our Obligation to it on a double account; the *First* is, because we are *Men*; the *Second*, because we are *Christians*.

As we are *Men*, we are born Members of a *Civil Society*; and therefore as we partake of the Benefits that flow from it, so likewise hath *That* a right to all we can do to promote its Happiness and Welfare. We must contribute what in us lies to the good of other Men, if we expect they should do the same by us. For our Life here is a kind of *Merchandise*, which consists in a perpetual *Commerce* and *Exchange* of good Offices; and he that will not perform his part in it, is no more fit to live, than that Merchant is to *Traffique* who takes with him neither *Money* nor *Goods*, but expects to be furnisht out of other *Mens*

Stocks for nothing. As such an one would be shut out from all Trade; so he that resolves to be *Uncharitable*, to further no Man's good but his own, ought, in all reason, to be driven from among Men, into a *Wilderness*, there to inhabit with *Rocks* and *Wild Beasts*, Creatures of his own *Complexion*. If this seem hard and grievous, let him but consider what difference there would be betwixt a *Wilderness* and a *City*, were all the Inhabitants of his unnatural Temper: were Men as void of Compassion as *Lyons* and *Bears*, had they no more Bowels than the *Rocks*, were they as insensible of one another's Necessities as *Stocks* and *Stones*, to be moved with no Cries of the Fatherless and Widow, to be melted with no Sighs and Groans of the Miserable and Afflicted. Were this the case once, all the Bonds of Communion must necessarily be broken; Man would no longer be a *Sociable* Creature, and consequently no Man.

2. But then, if to this Consideration of our being *Men*, we add the other also that we are *Christians*, we shall find the Obligation to grow upon us, and that we, of all Men living, ought to be employ'd in doing good. *Charity* is the distinguishing Character of our Religion, and 'tis from the Extent of *this*, that a *Christian* is known from a *Jew* or an *Heathen*. They say, *Love your Friend, and hate your Enemy*: but we, Disciples of a good and gracious and merciful Saviour, must *love* our *Enemies*, *bless* them that *curse* us, *do good* to them that *hate* us, and *pray* for them that *despitefully* use and *persecute* us. For otherwise we cannot be *the Children of our Father which is in Heaven, who makes his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sends his Rain on the Just and on the Unjust*, Mat. 5. 45. *Goodness* seems to be God's *beloved* Attribute; 'twas this alone that moved him to create the *World*; rather than want Objects about which to employ his loving Kindness and Mercy, he chose to make them out of nothing; and 'twas from the Creature's *Incapacity*, not from any *Defect* in the Divine *Power* and *Goodness*, that they were not from all Eternity. And as He made us at first, so doth he still by the continual influence of his *Providence* preserve us. *In him we live, move, and have our Being*; The Powers of our Souls and Bodies are supported by him, even in the very Instant wherein we abuse them to his dishonour. Should I now go on, and to these Acts of *Creation* and *Providence* endeavour at an account of that other stupendous one of our *Redemption* by his Son's meritorious Death and Passion; should I tell you that, rather than deliver us up to that Vengeance his Justice call'd for upon our Disobedience, he chose to give the immaculate *Jesus* out of his own Bosom, *God blessed*

for ever, to live here a wretched Life, and at last die an accursed and bitter Death, and all this to retrieve us from Horror and Woe to Salvation and Happiness; should I but mention the earnest strivings of his *Holy Spirit* with us, how he begs and entreats us to be happy, affords us means of Grace, and prompts us to make use of them, with all the other admirable Contrivances of infinite *Love* and *Wisdom* for our Good; Lord! where should I begin! where, when should I make an end! *Who can shew forth the loving kindness of the Lord, or declare the wonders that he doth for the Children of Men?* And can we know all this, and at the same time be unfruitful in this knowledge? Can we be *Christians* and *Uncharitable* together? O, no. Let us not deceive our selves. A bare *Belief* of the Articles of the Christian Faith will not suffice. For the Devils and the damn'd might expect to be saved at that rate. But the only Way to Heaven that I know of, is by *Faith* working by *Love*.

To do good then is our *Duty*, both as we are *Men*, and as we are *Christians*. I come now to shew,

II. That we must make use of all the *Opportunities* we have of doing good. *As we have opportunity let us do good.* And so many and so various are the Opportunities of doing good, that there is not a Day passes wherein we meet not with an occasion of doing our Neighbour some good Office or other, nay, of benefiting all Mankind by our Prayers at least! But I shall confine my self to the consideration of this opportunity alone, which is at present in our Hands, *viz.* the *Education of Poor Children in the Knowledge and Fear of God.* A Charity so *Beneficial* in its own Nature, and at this time so *seasonable*, that there is scarcely any other to be compar'd with it. For can any thing in the World conduce more to the *Advantage* of the *Children* themselves, to the *Service* of the *Publick*, to the *Honour* of *God*, and *Advancement* of *Religion*, than this doth? As for the *Children* themselves, wherein can they be benefited more than in their everlasting *Interest*? That *Interest* for which alone it was worth their while to be born, and in which should they miscarry, better had it been for them they never had been born. And how great their danger was in this regard, we may but too easily perceive by the vicious *Lives* of those who have had no other Education than many of these were likely to have met with; and my Heart trembles to think what multitudes of wretched Souls are now cast out into outer *Darkness*, and have their portion with *Devils*, which, had they been blest'd with the same *Education* that these at present are,

might have had their Lot among the *Saints*, and have sat down with *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob* in the Kingdom of Heaven. Nor yet is this Charity confined to their *Spiritual* Part only: For whilst the Salvation of their Souls is taken care of, their *Bodies* also partake in a proportionable share of the Advantage. I speak not of that decent *Cloathing*, for which they have exchanged their *Rags* and *Tatters*; but that whilst they are bred up in the *Nurture* and *Admonition* of the Lord, whilst they are taught to *seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, they are entitled to the only never failing Fund of all Necessaries, even that *Promise of God, All these things shall be added unto you*, Mat. 6. 33. And as to the *Publick*; What greater Service can be done it, than by a good Education to render those *useful Members* to the Commonwealth which otherwise would prove *Burthens* and *Nuisances* to it? For 'tis thro' want of Education that our Streets are pester'd with *Beggars*, our Highways infested with *Robbers*, our Goals fill'd with *Criminals* and *Bankrupts*, and our Gallows's loaded with *Thieves* and *Murderers*.

The ill Education of Children is to the Body *Politick*, what an Error in the first Concoction is to the *Natural*, it is very difficult, if not altogether impossible, to correct it afterwards, but the Blood is thereby corrupted, and noxious Humours increased, so as in time to destroy the very *Vitals*, unless they be carry'd off by some *Evacuations* or other, which many times must be very violent too. And we see, that in a *corrupted Nation* the *Sword of Justice* can seldom draw Blood enough; and therefore God unsheaths the *Sword of War* which draws more plentifully. From whence we may evidently perceive the unspeakable Mischief of breeding up Youth in *Ignorance* and *Irreligion*, since thereby a Nation may be brought into such a State, that one of the severest *Judgments* may be a *Mercy* to it, and the only way to *save* it, is to cast it into the extremest *Danger*. Whereas by a good and *Virtuous* Education, we should all learn to do our Duties in our several Stations, thereby promoting the *Welfare* and *Prosperity* of the *Publick*; and as there then would be no need, to neither would God be provoked to draw his *Sword* upon us, but He would rejoyce over us to do us good.

The Corruption indeed of Humane Nature is such, that it is not to be expected that even the best Education should have its due effect upon all; there is here and there one harden'd against the most powerful Means of Grace and Salvation; but yet a good Education is of that force and efficacy, that, generally speaking,

speaking, *Train up a Child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* This Observation was made long since by the *wisest* of Men, and is grounded upon *Experience*, and affirm'd by the *Spirit of God*, *Prov. 22. 6.* So that the Number of such *Reprobates* can be but *small* in comparison, and the *Exorbitancies* of these will be easily restrained by a due *Execution* of the Laws against *Immorality* and *Profaneness*. For the *Sources* of Impiety being thus stop'd, or rather those *Fountains* being heal'd, and instead of bitter Waters sending forth sweet, that *Deluge* of Wickedness, which as yet overflows the Land, will abate daily; so that *Magistrates*, to whose *Negligence in the Execution of their Office and ill Example* (as our *Parliament* declared to our late *Sovereign* of blessed Memory, and methinks it should make the Ears of all *Magistrates* tingle to hear it) the *Debauchery and Profaneness of the Nation* is chiefly owing. The *Magistrates*, I say, it is to be hop'd, will not, for the future, think it in vain to strive against the Stream, but exerting their Power, as by their *Oaths* and all the *Obligations* of Conscience they are bound to do, *Vice* will be so crush'd as to be no longer *National*. And then, as for the *Miscarriages* of a few private Persons, which it is impossible wholly to prevent, they will be to the *Body* of the Nation no more than what unavoidable *Slips* and *Infirmities* are to good Men; so that notwithstanding them, we shall be in the sight of God, an *Holy*, and, of Consequence, an *Happy* People.

Thus it appears, in some measure, how serviceable the present *Charity* is to the *Publick*, and therein also to the *Honour* of God, which is display'd in nothing more than in the *Welfare* and *Prosperity* of Kingdoms and States professing his *Holy* and *Eternal* Truth. But it hath a more direct and *immediate* tendency to that end, the very Design of it being to breed up those, who from their *Infancy* were *dedicated* to his *Service*, in such a manner, that they may walk *worthy* of the Vocation wherewith they are call'd, that they may be *Christians* in reality as well as Name, and that their *Light* may so shine before Men, that others seeing their good Works, may *glorify* our Father which is in Heaven.

This End I doubt not but, thro' the Blessing of God, will in time be fully answer'd, nay 'tis in some sort answer'd already; for whilst we see these Poor Children behaving themselves thus *decently* in the House of God, and joyning in all the parts of publick *Worship*; doth it not call to mind the Children crying in the *Temple*, *Hosanna to the Son of David*? And do

We not remember that Expression of our Lord's thereupon, *Out of the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings thou hast perfected Praise*, Mat. 21. 15, 16.

Furthermore, It would be *unjust*, were it possible for us, not to take notice how much God is *Honour'd* by this *Charity*, even *abstracted* from the blessed Consequences that are to be expected from it. It is of it self *an Odour of a sweet smell, a Sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God*. And who can do otherwise than praise and admire this *Grace* of the *Holy Spirit*, by which so many Persons of all Ranks and in all Parts of the Nation have been excited to an *Undertaking* of this Nature, and at such a *Time* as this is? An Undertaking that requires a great *Expence*, at a *Time* when to all outward appearance, we were least able to bear it, under the Charges of an expensive *War*. But yet notwithstanding these Difficulties the Work goes on, and, blessed be God, prospers in our hand. And well is it for us that it is undertaken at this time; for never could it have been more *seasonable*.

There hath been a very sensible *decay* of *Christianity* among us for these threescore Years and more. The Confusions of the great Rebellion were attended with as great Confusion in *Church* or *State*. Under that Anarchy, *Hereticks* spawn'd like the *Frogs* in *Egypt*, and croak'd all over the Nation; by these was the *Faith* corrupted: And there being at the same time the most horrid *Impieties* committed under the greatest pretences to *Godliness*, Multitudes abhor'd the very *appearance* of Religion, and chose to live like *Heathens*, that they might avoid the imputation of *Puritanism*; and thus went all *Morality* to wreck. The Efforts that were made to retrieve either *Faith* or *Morals*, were in the mean while, if any at all, so *faint* and *weak*, that had not God put it into the Hearts of some excellent Persons to try some more *effettual* Methods, we were in a fair way very quickly to have had little of either. Now indeed we may perceive some stirrings of Spiritual Life, our dry Bones begin to move, and there is greater hope of a Recovery than in so short a time could have been expected. But as yet we find our selves in so *ill* a state, and our *Disease* is so far from being conquer'd, that it is as yet attended with terrible Convulsions. For never did the *Devil* and his *Angels* struggle more violently than at this Day. There is not one *Article* of our *Faith* but what is struck at with the utmost Malice, nay, even the *Authority* of the *Holy Scriptures* is openly attack'd by profess'd Enemies of all

all reveal'd Religion, and secretly undermined by *Enthusias*
tick Pretenders to the *Light within*.

The Execution of the Laws against *Immorality* and *Profaneness* is by many ridiculed and discountenanced; and yet what need there is of a *Vigorous* Execution of them I leave to the Judgment of any one that doth but pass the Streets. Could we ever have sunk into so base a *Degeneracy* had all our Youth been *Educated*, as they ought to have been, in the *Fear* and *Knowledge* of God? And was it not high time to put a stop to the growing Mischief, by entering upon those *Methods*, which, had they been always put in practice, might have utterly prevented it? That the present *Charity* is one of those *Methods*, and a most *seasonable* one too, we cannot doubt. For what course, think we, would these Poor Children have taken, had they been sent abroad into so corrupt a World, without the *Preservative* of a good Education? Even that to which the *Corruption* of their own Nature had most enclined them. For want of sound *Principles*, they would have been carried about with every *wind* of Doctrine that had happen'd to whistle in their Ears, and been overthrown by every *Temptation* that had lain in their way. But now, tho' I instance in these *Poor Children*, I would not be mistaken as if I thought only the *Children* of the *Poor* could be ruined thro' want of Education. No, the *Children* of the *Rich* are liable, God knows, to the very same; for there is the same Original *Pravity* of Nature in one as the other. But it is to be presum'd that They, who are able to give their Children a *good* Education, will not suffer them to go without it. Especially now that they see the *Children* of the *Poor* enjoy so great a *Blessing*. For it would be a *Sin* and a *Shame* should the *Rich* suffer their *Children* to go *untaught* and *undisciplin'd*, when the *Children* of the *Poor* are brought up, before their Eyes, to good *Learning* and *Manners*. Certainly this should raise a laudable *Emulation* in them, and they should look upon themselves concern'd in *Honour*, as well as *Conscience*, to see that their *Children* may not be excell'd in *Learning* and *Virtue* by those who are of so much *inferior* Rank and Station to them in the World. And if so, we have another Reason, which alone were sufficient to recommend the present *Charity* to us. It is indeed in the whole so highly beneficial, and upon so many accounts, that should I stand to reckon up all the *Advantages* of it, I should not have time to speak to any thing else.

This

This only shall I say further concerning it, that the *Method* in which it is managed is so agreeable to the *Temper* and *Spirit* of the *Gospel*, that all who call themselves *Christians* should, one would think, be ambitious of coming into it, and promoting it to the utmost of their *Power*.

From those who differ from us in the *Fundamentals* of Religion, much, indeed, is not to be expected: but as for those whose *Dissent* hath no other Ground than *Offence* taken at our *Rites* and *Ceremonies*, and *Forms* of Church Government, I cannot see why they should not joyn in it with Heart and Hand.

The Children, 'tis true, are instructed in the *Church Catechism*: And what is that but an excellent *Summary* of the *Fundamentals* of our common *Christianity*? They are withal taught to worship God according to the establish'd *Liturgy*: And what is that, but such a *Form* of *Worship*, as, to say the least that can be said in its Praise, the Foreign Churches highly approve of; and the *Dissenters* themselves have acquitted from the Charge of any thing sinful, by *Occasionally* communicating in the most solemn parts of it? So that if any of them stand out, and refuse to contribute merely because things are not managed just according to their *Will* and *Pleasure*; I must needs say, They are Persons very much addic'd to *Party* and *Faction*; and, how highly soever they may esteem their own *Way*, they do, by their Behaviour, give us but little cause to wish that any Body else should be bred up in it. For when Men can be content that Children should *perish* for want of Instruction, rather than that they should enjoy the *Means* of *Grace* and *Salvation* in the *Communion* of the Church, They do but too apparently discover what *Spirit* they are of; and I desire them, as they love their own Souls, seriously to consider it.

Thus much I am sure of, that they have here a noble opportunity of doing good put into their Hands; but how they will answer to God their *rejecting* of it, I cannot yet see. God grant they themselves may see to it sometime before the great and terrible Day of *Account* comes. As for you, my Brethren much honoured and beloved, who continue in the *Unity* of the Church, I need say the less to you, since it is among you this *Charity* first took its *Rise*, and is by you in a manner wholly supported. I say in a manner, because there are found among those of the *Separation* also some few of so *Christian* a Spirit as to give you some Assistance

assistance in it. May God remember them for it, and wipe
 out this their good Deed for their failings in other re-
 spects toward the Church of God, but spare them for his
 mercy sake. But yet among our selves, there are some, I
 fear, to be found whose Hearts are so set upon the World, as
 to lay hold neither on this opportunity of doing good, nor
 any other. And indeed how can it be expected, that they
 who lay not hold on *this*, should lay hold on any other?
 What shall I say to these? Or under what Name shall I
 address my self to them? Do they deserve the Name of
 Churchmen? They who are a dishonour even to the Chri-
 stian name? They who have no Faith, or no better than
 none, a dead Faith, the Faith of Devils? Can the Church
 look upon these as her Children? Or will Christ own them
 at the last Day? No; He hath plainly told us what they
 are to expect, even to be set among the Goats on the
 Left Hand, and to have that dreadful Sentence pass'd up-
 on them, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, pre-
 pared for the Devil and his Angels. For I was an hungry,
 and ye gave me no meat, &c.* Mat. 25. 41, 42. But on
 the other hand, You who are Contributors to this Charity,
 have great reason to bless God for this opportunity, and great-
 er yet for the Grace he hath given you to lay hold on it.
 As many of you, especially as contribute in a just Proportion
 to your Abilities, and the Exigencies of the Occasion.
 The rest indeed have not cause for so entire a Satisfaction
 in themselves. For, tho' I dare not say that what they
 do will not be accepted of God in some measure, yet
 so far as they fall short of doing what they might, and
 what the occasion requires, so far do they fall short of do-
 ing their Duty, nor do they come up to the full extent
 of the Apostle's Rule; *As we have opportunity let us do good.*
 What then? Is this an opportunity for the Rich only to
 exercise their Charity upon? May not the Poor also bear
 a share in it? Yes, certainly. For tho' this Charity be of
 such a nature as to require large Contributions, and must
 therefore depend upon the Rich chiefly for its support; yet
 the Poor may hereupon give such Testimonies of their Bene-
 volence, as shall turn very much to their own account, tho'
 they amount but to little in other respects.

We find that under the Law, God accepted of a Turtle
 Dove or an Young Pigeon, at the Hands of those who were
 not able to bring a Lamb, Lev. 12. 8. and the Two Mites
 the poor Widow cast into the Treasury of the Temple,

were

were of more value in his sight than the vast *Sums* of the *Rich*, Luke 21. He indeed that soweth *little*, when he may sow *plenteously*, shall reap *little*: but he that soweth *little* with a *liberal* hand, and would sow *more* had he *more* to sow, shall reap *plenteously*. Upon the whole therefore, none of us all, whether *Rich* or *Poor*, can take better advice, as touching this matter, than that which good old *Tobit* gave his Son, viz. *Be merciful after thy Power. If thou hast much, give plenteously. If thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little: for so gatherest thou thy self a good reward in the day of necessity.* Tob. 4. 8, 9.

Having thus consider'd the Obligation that lies upon us to Works of *Charity* in general, and to this Work in particular which now lies upon our Hands; I proceed to consider the *Extent* of *Charity* in relation to its *Object*. And herein I shall be brief, having upon the last Head ran to a much greater length than I at first intended, tho' I kept my self, all the while, under a great restraint. Wherefore,

III. Our *Beneficence* must be *universal*, and we are to look upon *all Men* as proper *Objects* of it. *A Righteous Man*, saith *Solomon*, *regardeth the Life of his Beast*, Prov. 12. 10. and if so he will, certainly regard the *Good* and *Welfare* of every *Man*; of *Man* his *Brother* by Nature, born of the same *Stock*, and made after the *Image* of the same *God*. The Perverseness indeed and Malice of some Men is such, that to do them *Good*, is to do our selves a *Mischief*; nay, God knows, we are often forced to fight in our own defence, and to take away other Mens Lives to save our own. But these are exempt Cases, wherein we are so far from having any *opportunity* of doing Men *good*, that we lie under an unhappy *necessity* of doing them *harm*. But in all other Cases, we are obliged to do every Man all the *good* we can, and to benefit even our *Enemies* as far as is consistent with our own safety and welfare. For so saith the Scripture, *If thine Enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink*, Prov. 25. 21. If therefore our very *Enemies* be *Objects* of our *Charity*, the *rest* of Mankind are unquestionably so. But foras much as we are weak indigent Creatures, and the Sphere of our Activity lies within so narrow a compass, that altho' we are obliged to wish well to all, we can actually do good but to a few, it is necessary that we make a distinction betwixt Men, and in the dispensation of our *Charity*

prefer

prefer some before others upon the Account, either of their personal *Merit*, or *urgency* of their *Necessities*, or the *Relation* we have to them of *Kindred*, *Friendship*, *Neighbourhood*, &c. all which are sufficient grounds for such a distinction; but yet none of them to stand in competition with that of *Christianity*, they having one *Lord*, one *Faith*, one *Baptism*. For in doing good,

IV. We must have a particular regard to our Fellow *Christians*, those of the *Household* of *Faith*. And good Reason why; for these are the nearest *Relations* we have upon Earth. The *Communion* of particular Christians with one another, and of all with *Christ*, is so strict and close, that it unites us into one *Body*, of which he is the *Head*. Thus our *Apostle*, Rom. 12. 4, 5. *As we have many Members in one Body, so we being many are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another.* And 1 Cor. 10. 17. *We being many, are one Bread and one Body, and Ch. 12. 27. Now ye are the Body of Christ, and Members in particular.* And if so, what *Relation* can be nearer to us? Can any thing be dearer to a Man, than the *Members* of his own *Body*, his own *Flesh*, and his own *Bones*? It is said indeed, *that a Man shall leave Father and Mother, and shall be joyn'd unto his Wife, and they two shall be one Flesh*, Eph. 5. 31. So that the *Conjugal* Unity may seem to be as great as the *Christian*: But yet it is not. For that is *Carnal*, this *Spiritual*. *Two shall be one Flesh*: but *those that are joyn'd unto the Lord are one Spirit*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. Besides, that *Unity* is only the *Type*, this the *Substance*; that the *Shadow*, this the *Reality*, Eph. 5. 32. In as much then as the *Substance* exceeds the *Type*, the *Reality* the *Shadow*, and the *Spirit* the *Flesh*, so much is the *Relation* betwixt *Christians* nearer than any *earthly* *Relation* whatsoever. Whence it follows, even according to the dictates of *Nature*, that in doing good we ought to have an especial regard to the *Household* of *Faith*, and prefer our *Fellow Christians* before any other.

Since therefore we are obliged, so far as it lies in our *Power*, to do good to all Men, and among Men, especially to *Christians*: behold here the most noble *Object* of *Charity* in the *World*. *Children*, the most endearing part of *Mankind*, those whom we naturally tender, and our *Bowels* yearn upon at the very first sight. *Christian Children* too, *Members* of *God's Family*, and of the *Household* of *Faith*, such as our *Lord* could not endure should be kept from him, but *embraced them in his Arms, and laid his Hands upon them,*

them, and bless'd them. These are the *Lambs* of Christ's Flock, against whom that *roaring Lyon* the Devil hath a particular spite; and shall not we do our utmost to rescue them out of his Jaws? Certainly we must have but very little regard to our *Saviour* himself, if we can despise the to whom He shew'd so great an Affection; and must have but a mean esteem of the *Merits* of his *Death*, if we are backward in promoting those Ends for which He died. These Considerations alone are sufficient to engage every one in the present *Charity*, that hath but the least spark of *Christianity* in his Heart; but yet there is another very prevailing one yet to be spoken to, *viz.*

V. If we persevere in doing good, we shall not fail to receive a reward. *Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.* Tho' God in the very Frame of his Laws did manifestly consult our good, and so joyn our *Duty* and *Welfare* together, that to obey him is for our own *Interest*; yet, out of his abundant Mercy, he hath added the encouragement of many great and precious Promises to engage us to Obedience. This is apparent in all the Instances of our *Duty*, but in none more than this of *Charity*, which hath the Promise of this *Life*, and that which is to come. For as to this *Life*, it is the most profitable thing we can undertake. He that lets out his *Wealth* upon it is the wisest *Usurer* that ever was; For his *Security* is good, the *Lord of Heaven and Earth* is his Debtor, and he hath pass'd his word for repayment; For it is written, Prov. 19. 17. *He that hath pity on the Poor, lendeth to the Lord; and look what he layeth out shall be paid him again.* And accordingly, it is often seen that the Estates of *Charitable Men* are even in this World prosperous: They thrive themselves, and convey the blessing down to their Posterity. So true is it which the holy *Psalms* saith, *I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the Righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging their Bread.* Now by the *Righteous* is meant the *Charitable Man* here; for it follows, that *he is ever merciful and lendeth, and his Seed is blessed*, Psal. 37. 25, 26. Which words yet are not to be interpreted as if 'twere impossible for a *Charitable Man* or his *Posterity* to be reduced to Want; For there are some Sins, as for instance, *Drunkenness, Adultery, Gaming, &c.* in their own nature so wastful and expensive as to consume even the *Incomes* of *Charity*, so that nothing less than a *Miracle* can keep those who are guilty of them from starving.

starving. And if a *Charitable* Person be at any time reduced to want, I am apt to think that his own Conscience, if well examined, would quickly acquaint him with sufficient cause for it. But this I speak only in *general*, and according to the *ordinary* course of God's Dispensations: there may indeed be some *particular* cases, wherein for the tryal of Man's *Faith* and *Patience*, or some other good and wise reason, God may visit even the *best* of his Servants with extreme *Poverty*, as he did *Job* and *Lazarus*; but then he is sure to recompence them abundantly for it afterward, as he did the very same Persons, the one, with all the *Blessings* this World could afford, and the other, with the *Comforts* and *Joys* of *Abraham's* Bosom.

And if this Case should happen to be any of ours, we should upon the whole have but little cause to complain. We are *unjust* therefore to God if we abstain from *Works* of *Charity* thro' fear of want. He hath promised that in *due season we shall reap if we faint not*. Let us then cheerfully persevere in our Duty, and trust him with our Reward; for if we once with-hold our Hands, all our good Deeds are utterly lost, not one of them will be remember'd; but *for the iniquity we shall commit we shall die*, Ezek. 18. 24. And indeed, how can we reasonably expect any reward at God's hands, when because it doth not come just when we would have it, we do in effect openly declare that we dare trust him no longer? This is such an affront to a God *jealous* of his Honour, as can deserve no other return than *Eternal* Death. As therefore we expect any *comfort* from the good Deeds we have already done, or the *Salvation* of our Souls to all Eternity, let us not draw back for whatever discouragements we may possibly meet with here: *Let us not be weary in well doing*, but proceed resolutely on, and then we may assure our selves that we shall be rewarded one time or other. *In due season we shall reap if we faint not*. God knows best *how* and *when* to recompence us. Let us then resign up our Wills to his, and patiently wait his leisure: For *his* is the due Season, not *ours*. Let us abound in good Works, let us sow *plentifully*, and we shall reap *plentifully*. But the time of our Harvest we must leave to God, for that is in his disposal alone, and well it is for us that it is so. For had we the command of it, we should, no doubt, be over-hasty; like the mistrustful Husbandman, we should gather our Crop before it were ripe, and so lose the greatest part of the Advantage, if not all. We should be apt to take it in the good Things of this World, in *Temporal* Blessings.

lings and Prosperity ; we should not have patience enough to let it grow up into Crowns and Scepters, and *Eternal Bliss* in the World to come. As *St. Chrysostom* understands the words, they should be translated, *We shall reap without fainting*. A new and wonderful kind of Harvest, saith he ; in our common Harvest the *Reaper* is at as much toil and pains as was the *Sower*, but not so in that. It is true indeed that all the *Advantages* of this Life are ordinarily attended with *Labour* and *Sorrow*, and it is the *Blessing of the Lord* (the *Charitable Man's Portion* alone) that maketh Rich, and he addeth no *Sorrow* with it, *Prov. 10. 22*. But why do I talk of this Life ? When the *Great Day* of our Harvest is come ; and our Lord shall have pronounced upon us this Sentence, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World*. For I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in : naked, and ye clothed me : sick, and ye visited me : In prison, and ye came unto me : *Mat. 25. 34, &c.* Then is there a final end to all *Labour* and *Sorrow*, and we shall have nothing to do but to enjoy pure and unmixt Delights, and to *Reign* with God to all Eternity. A State of *Happiness* beyond all thought or expression. May God of his infinite Mercy give us all that due sense of, and value for it, that we may not thro' an *Improvident* parsimony forfeit our Title to it, and by a mistaken frugality throw away a Crown infinitely more precious than ten thousand Worlds.

And now, O blessed God, who art good, and doest good, give us all Grace to imitate thee (so far as humane Weakness allows) in that thy most glorious Attribute ; and the good Work which Thou hast begun in these thy Servants, do thou accomplish unto the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost be all Honour and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

F I N I S